

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

RYAN DAVID MCCOURT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

SCULPTURE

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1999



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<https://archive.org/details/McCourt1999>

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Final Visual Presentation

submitted by RYAN DAVID MCCOURT in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

The University of Alberta

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Fanfare	1999	Steel	36x132x43 inches

Insurance Value:
\$1500.00

Two Years - New Sculpture is comprised of a pair of solo exhibitions by Ryan McCourt and Andrew French. These shows represent their final visual presentations for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta's renowned sculpture program.

Ryan McCourt earned his undergraduate degree in 1997 from the University of Alberta. There, he continued his studies under Professor Peter Hide, in the graduate program. His work results from uniting the tradition of constructed abstract sculpture with the intimate scale of interior design.

Andrew French graduated from The Kent Institute of Art and Design, England, in 1994. In 1997, he came to the University of Alberta on a Study Abroad Studentship from The Leverhulme Trust to begin his graduate studies. During the program, his process has evolved from using predrawn, carefully measured conceptions, to a more spontaneous approach, responding to found objects.

Sponsors

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Cafe Orleans
Southern Style Cuisine



designed by: Christine Osrnchuk

Two Years New Sculpture

Ryan McCourt
Modern Artifacts
September 14 - 26, 1999

Andrew French
Allusions to Grandeur
September 17 - 28, 1999

September 14 - 26, 1999

at The Fine Arts Building Gallery
1-1 Fine Arts Building, University of Alberta
112 Street & 89 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6G 2C9

Opening Reception:

Thursday, September 16 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Hours:

Tuesday - Friday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sunday 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

• closed Monday, Saturday and statutory holidays



Night Music, Ryan McCourt



Daydream, Ryan McCourt

Zoom, Andrew French

ANDREW FRENCH

Artwork & 3D Sculpture

September 17 - 28, 1999

at The Arts Barns
10330 - 84 Avenue, Edmonton, AB

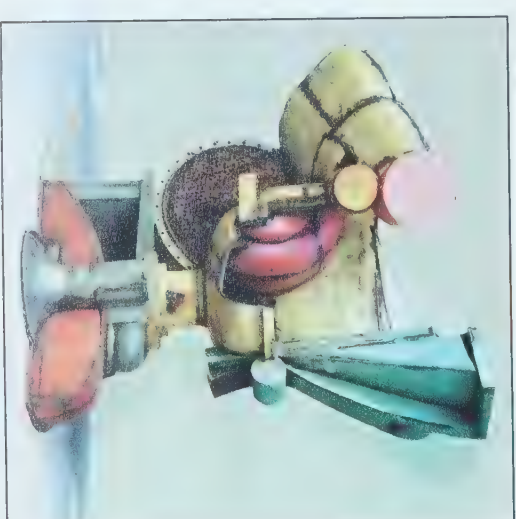
Opening Reception:

Friday, September 17 7:00 pm - 2:00 am

Hours:

September 18 & 19 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

September 20 - 28 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm



Still Life, Andrew French

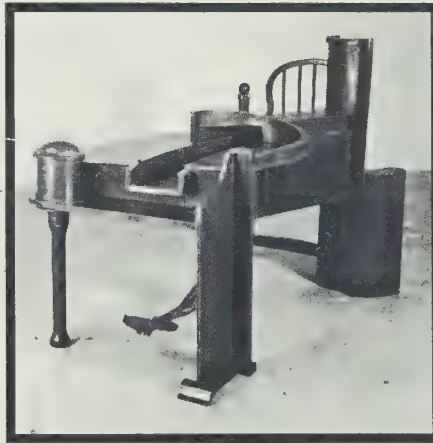


Ryan McCourt Modern Artifacts

This exhibition is the final visual presentation for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture

September 14 - 26, 1999

Public Viewing Dates



1 - 1 Fine Arts Building University of Alberta

112 Street and 89 Avenue
Edmonton, Canada
T6G 2C9
780.492.2081

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 10 am-5 pm
Sunday 2 pm-5 pm
Closed on Saturday, Monday
and Statutory Holidays

Opening Reception:
Thursday,
September 16
7:00 - 10:00 pm



The Alberta
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University of Alberta

Department of Art and Design

gallery

Fine Arts Building
fab

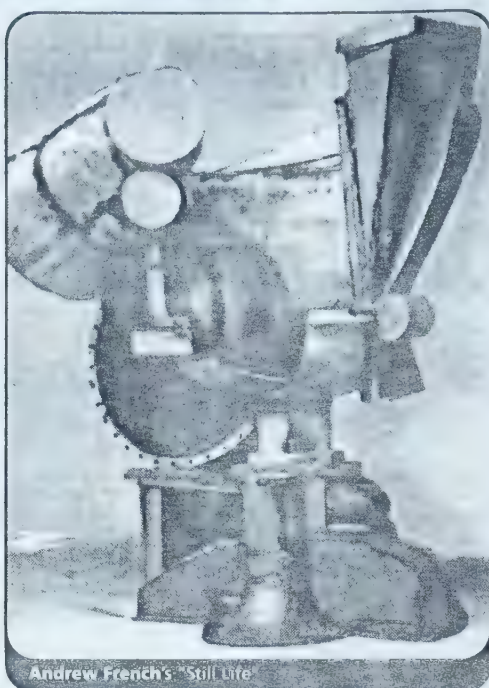
Slide Listing

1. FAB Gallery Main Floor (outside view)
2. Overture, 1999 (steel)
3. Stage, 1997 (steel)
4. Revelation, 1999 (steel)
5. Rapture of the Deep, 1998 (steel)
6. Study for "The Dogon", 1999 (steel)
7. The Dogon, 1999 (steel)
8. The Dogon, 1999 (steel)
9. Fanfare, 1999 (steel)
10. Fanfare, 1999 (steel)
11. Night Music, 1998, (steel)
12. Night Music, 1998 (steel)
13. Honky Tonk, 1999 (steel)
14. Honky Tonk, 1999 (steel)
15. Easy Street, 1999 (steel)
16. Easy Street, 1999 (steel)
17. March, 1999 (steel)
18. March, 1999 (steel)
19. Revival, 1999 (steel)
20. Revival, 1999 (steel)
21. Crucible, 1997 (steel)
22. (left to right) Pine, Daydream, Hidebound
23. Pine, 1999 (steel)
24. Pine, 1999 (steel)
25. Daydream, 1998 (steel)
26. Hidebound, 1997 (steel)
27. Hidebound, 1997 (steel)
28. FAB Gallery (outside view)

Scrap metal or sculpture?



Ryan McCourt's "Night Music"



Andrew French's "Still Life"

In hands of French and McCourt, it's all art

BY DANIELLE ZYP

There's an oft-posed question about the abstract metal sculptures that U of A fine arts students have been producing for nigh on 30 years: "What's the difference between this sculpture and what already lies in the scrap-metal yard?"

Graduate students Ryan McCourt and Andrew French address that attitude head-on. "It's a slow process to understand someone's Master's thesis," says French. "If you were to open a written thesis by a physical engineer, you might need to look up a few words in the dictionary and read it slowly."

"It's not like flipping open the comics in the paper," adds McCourt. "People need to take the time to stand and look at it," concludes French.

French's thesis is the culmination of two years' worth of daily work. Weighing in at well over one tonne and standing five metres high, *Column or Pillar* (he hasn't decided on the name yet) is a statement about the artist's commitment to solid foundations and hard work, as well as an expression of reverence toward an ancient yet enduring architectural symbol.

Narcotic art

It stands in sharp contrast to the more intimately scaled work of McCourt. His smallest piece, *Rapture of the Deep*, is the product of the

kind of artistic frenzy that doesn't occur every day. Late one night, juiced up by the constant charge of creativity and euphoric from lack of sleep (a condition he likens to nitrogen narcosis, which deep-sea divers experience), McCourt and another student welded together this sculpture in a one-hour surge of energy. With each element fitting precisely and elegantly together, the piece seemed to appear like magic.

Although both men were heavily influenced by Professor Peter Hide,

McCourt and French followed divergent paths in their approach to sculpture. McCourt, who

studied at the U of A as an undergraduate, departed from the spontaneous, hands-on method of creation the school encouraged and began to plan out his creations in advance. His beautifully appointed sculptures, often based on musical instruments, sing his intentions: "I want my sculpture to be approachable and people-oriented."

Pardon my French

French, by contrast, graduated from the Kent Institute of Art and Design in England and slowly moved away from the linear, symmetrical, plotted-out designs he used to create, and began making most of his decisions as the project grew, responding on the spot to found objects and colour combinations. In *Still Life*, he applies colour boldly, carefully aging the paint so the piece gains an autonomous feel. "I've struggled with colour," he says. "I often add colour when it's half-finished and then continue to weld on top of the paint."

Struggling with colour, composi-

tion, texture, value, scale, concepts and the process of creation—that is only part of what an artist does. Add the level of hard work and pure energy that goes into these metal constructions, and there's no question that the finished product amounts to much more than scrap metal. ☐

Modern Artifacts by Ryan McCourt •
FAB Gallery, University of Alberta •
Sept. 14-26 • Allusions to Grandeur
by Andrew French • Arts Barns •
Sept. 17-28

visual arts profile

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VUE Weekly

ARTS

For a FREE listing, fax 426-2888 or e-mail listings@vue.ab.ca. Deadline is 3 pm Friday.

Art events

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10106-124 St., 488-6611, 488-5900. **FIRE DESIGN:** Selections from *Can-Iron: A journey* show from the Canadian Blacksmithing Conference. Sept. 18-Oct. 30. • **DISCOVERY GALLERY: TERRACOTTA TRIBUTE—Celebrating Women:** Linda Miller's new works. Sept. 18-Oct. 30. Opening reception, artist in attendance, SAT, Sept. 18, 1-4 pm.

THE ARTS BARN 10330-84 Ave., 491-3008. **ALLUSIONS TO GRANDEUR:** Sculpture by Andrew French. Sept. 17-28. Opening reception: FRI, Sept. 17, 7 pm-2 am.

BUGARA/KMET GALLERIES 12310 Jasper Ave., 482-2854. Sheila Luck: new abstract paintings. Sept. 18-29. Meet the artist, opening reception: Sept. 18, 2-4 pm.

CAFE LA GARE 10308A 81 Ave. & 81st St. **NZK PROVOKES CITYWIDE HYPOTHESE:** Mixed media works by Tracy Suter, Mariann Taubensee and Lar Herr. FRI 17 (8 pm-1 am). **DOUGLAS**

UDEL GALLERY 10332-124 St., 488-4445. Andrew Valko, Eliza Griffiths, Nat Husar, Tony Scherman, Les Thomas, Tar Polataiko, Sylvain Voyer, Adam Fuss, Al Reynolds. • **FALL SHOW:** Opening Sept. 20 Oct. 9.

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq., 422-6223. • **CROWING THE WILDERNESS:** Until Oct. 11. **THOMSON AND THE ORIGINAL SEVEN:** Featuring works from the EAG Collection until summer 2000. • **URBAN/SUBURBAN:** Discover the dual nature of urban and suburban spaces. The photographs in this exhibition span the decades from the 1930s to the present, mapping out shifting landscapes of urban centres and suburban communities, and the pleasures and perils that exist within both. Until Oct. 11. • **DO NOT DISTURB: THE IMAGE OF ANXIETY:** Work from the EAG collection including recent acquisitions by Douglas Walker, Eli Lang and John Scott. Until Jan. 9, 2000.

• **LAWREN HARRIS/A.Y. JACKSON: JASPER ROBSON 1924:** Harris and Jackson explore the landscape, travelling on foot to Maligne Canyon, Maligne Lake, Tonquin Valley, Athabasca Valley, Mount Elbert, Cavell, Mount Robson. This exhibition brings together paintings, drawings, photographs and archival material that document Harris and Jackson's time in Jasper. Until Jan. 16, 2000. • **MODEL HOMES: EXPLORATIONS IN ALTERNATE LIVING:** Contemporary Canadian and international artists look at artistic solutions for the problems of 21st century living. Until Nov. 7, 2000. • **THE KITCHEN: ELEANOR LAZAR QUINTANA ROO:** Photo-based works. Laz examines the themes of travel and tourism, memory and expectation and the inevitable processes of change and transformation that take place over time. Until Nov. 7, 2000. • **CONTEMPORARY ART ISSUES READING GROUP:** An ongoing forum for the discussion of ideas, trends and movements that have shaped contemporary art in Edmonton and abroad. Selected readings complement themes and issues being explored in current EAG exhibitions. Every second THU, Sept. 24, 7-9 pm. • **WED 21:** pm: Visiting Architect Lecture: Ron Keenbergh.

FAB GALLERY 1-1 Fine Arts Bldg., U of A, 112 St., 89 Ave., 492-3081. **MODELS: ARTIFACTS:** Sculptures by Ryan McCourt. Until Sept. 26. Opening reception: THU, Sept. 16, 7-10 pm.

LATITUDE 53 10137-104 St., 423-5311. **SHINY:** Works by Shelley Ouellet, Angus Wyatt, Clint Wilson, Anthony Pavlic and Paul Morrison. Curated by David LaRiviere. Based on the notion that consumer culture has assimilated the visual codes that render aesthetic gestures legible which are then incorporated into the media—not everything that shines is gold. Sept. 16-Oct. 1. Opening reception: THU, Sept. 16, 8 pm.

LESSARD LIBRARY Lessard Shopping Centre, 6104-172 St., 496-1871. Five artists from the Edmonton Art Club. SEP 25-Dec. SAT, Sept. 25, 2 pm: club members demonstrate painting techniques.

THE LOOK 2824 Calgary Trail, 436-1414. **FANTASTIC FALL FAVOURITES:** Local art sculptures by Claudia Garneau, Thomas Love, Sheila Morgan, Neeta Koticha, Fr Haddock. Until Oct. 28. Meet the artist reception: FRI, Sept. 16 & SAT Sept. 17, 5:30-9 pm.

MCMULLEN GALLERY U of A Hospital 8440-112 St. MON-FRI: 10-8; SAT/SUN 4 pm. **THE WORLD AROUND ME:** Inuit art from the University of Lethbridge art collections. Until Nov. 7. • **INUIT ART: SPEAKER THE NORTH:** Talk by Curator Samantha Archibald, THU, Sept. 16, 7 pm. • **Every WED (1-5 pm):** Everything you wanted to know about Inuit art: Lenore Stoneberg. • **Every WED, 2 pm:** Story Time! Tales and legends of the Inuit. • **Every THU, 1-5 pm:** Drop-in Studio—Artist in Residence: Inuit

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LATITUDE 53
Society of Artists

SHINY

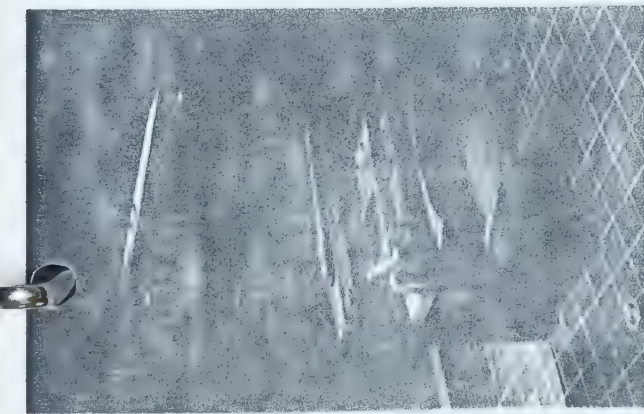
curated by David LaRiviere

Sept 16
TO
Oct 16

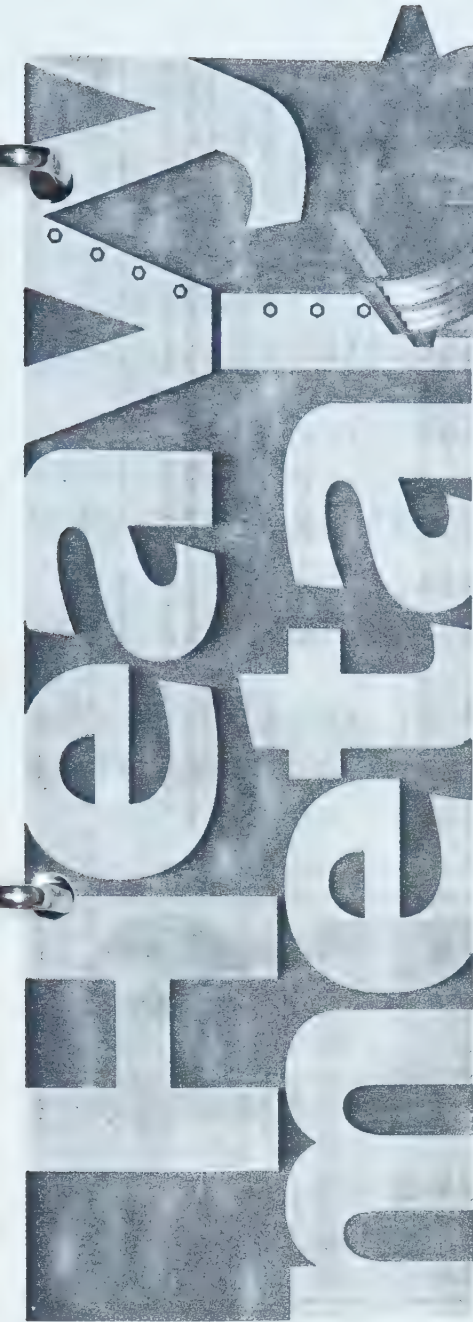
The Territory of Light: Ten Remembered Places

by Derek Besant

SNAP GALLERY



Honky Tonk, 1999, Ryan McCourt



By Phoebe Dey

To say Ryan McCourt and Andrew French are into heavy metal would not be an exaggeration.

The pair recently finished graduate studies in the university's fine arts program. Both sculptors work mainly with steel and create the type of pieces that just won't fit into a briefcase. But that's where the similarities end.

Most of McCourt's sculptures take on a weathered, bronze tone with refined lines and curves. His detail and craftsmanship often give the pieces a soft look, and it can be surprising to learn they are made out of steel.

They range in size from hand-held abstract works to 675-kilogram paradigms of musical instruments and furniture.

"Some don't refer to anything other than what your imagination brings to it," said McCourt. "My only philosophy is that I subscribe to the

When McCourt was in his second year of anthropology, he took a fine arts class just to fill his timetable. Now he hopes to make a living at it.

McCourt said naming a favorite piece is like asking a mother to name her favorite child. But spectators picked a clear-cut winner at the opening reception. "Pine," the only piece of the collection sold so far, drew rave reviews from viewers, said McCourt.

People were lumbering on the sleek, contemporary, ash-colored chaise-lounge and caressed its smooth surface.

How McCourt comes up with his pieces remains a mystery to him.

"Part of me is deciding I want to make a thing look like a throne or a piano, and part is finding a great piece of material in the scrap yard and going from there," he said.

How McCourt comes up with his pieces remains a mystery to him.

"Part of me is deciding I want to make a thing look like a throne or a piano, and part is finding a great piece of material in the scrap yard and going from there," he said.

Pillar, 1999, Andrew French



would like a part to go in that area so I'll look for something specific but will stumble upon something entirely different."

French describes his pieces as "more industrial and slightly bolder" than McCourt's, works which are "more intimate" than his own. French's pieces mark a transition through his learning process, whereas it is difficult to detect an emotional shift in McCourt's sculptures.

An abstract, colorful piece, "Still Life," is one of French's latest works. "It grew quickly and boisterously," he said. "As I went along I got more involved with the intimacy of it. When I look at it, it actually surprises me, and I

idea it's quality that's important, and that what you are making is a visual thing. If someone doesn't think it's a piano—that's okay. I just want them to enjoy it."

—Andrew French, grad student

French echoes those comments.

"It's not as simple as writing down a shopping list," said French. "Sometimes I'll be in the middle of a sculpture and think I

and it hard to believe I made it. It's almost like I don't remember doing it. It was much more spontaneous than usual."

Several of his works portray different types of "human" containers such as a cage, altar and an actual bathtub. "I was interested in the way it cradles the person," he said.

He does have a favorite piece: a 3,600-kilogram earthy structure called "Pillar" for its resemblance to a Greek column.

"It's the most resolved of my work," he said. "So many of the other pieces I consider a stepping stone."

French will take his new-found knowledge home to England when he returns in just about a month. Three years after graduating from the Kent Institute of Art and Design in England in 1994, he arrived in Alberta on a Study Abroad Studentship.

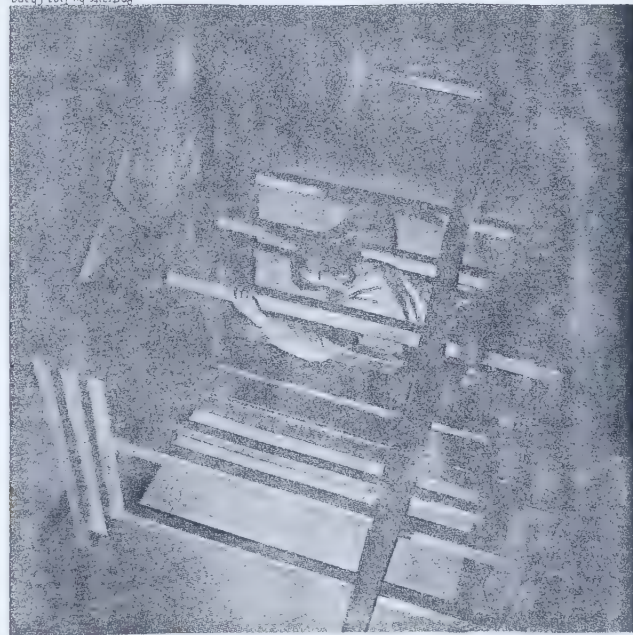
Since he can't take his massive sculptures back to England, he hopes they'll find homes in Edmonton.

"Perhaps one will be displayed on the university campus. If the others aren't sold, they will be put in storage or discarded," he said. "But I'm pleased in the way things have developed."

And to think it all started with some heavy metal. ■



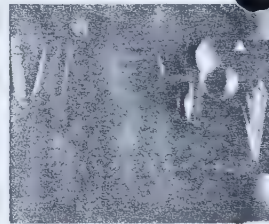
Zoom, 1998, Andrew French



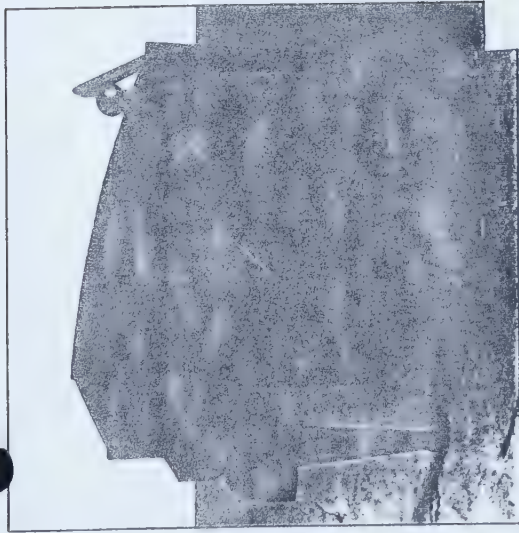
French in one of his "human" cages.

Enjoying one of his sculptures: McCourt.

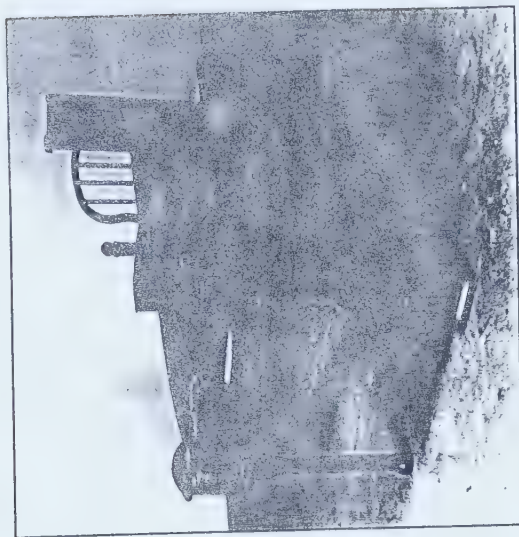
King, 1998, Andrew French



folio **backpage**



Daydream, Ryan McCourt



Night Music, Ryan McCourt

RYAN McCOURT
Modern Artifacts

September 14 - 26, 1999

at The Fine Arts Building Gallery
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Opening Reception

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Hours

Tuesday - Friday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sunday 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

• closed Monday, Saturday and statutory holidays

Sept. 14 '99

Sept 14

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Sept. 14

Sept. 14th/99

Sept (4/99

Sept 14

Sept 15. 99

Sept 15/99.

4

11

"

mmmm...always the first
great stuff! photo wasted!

Congratulations Ryan.

I think it's interesting how many of your
works have a seat attached, and they
look like pianos... GOOD JOB!!
I like the colour added to the
Sculptors, it really lightens things up.

many made me smile - thanx

Just one batch of my magic cookies
and you knock off, an "ode to Linda"
with the fantastic "EAST STREET" hmmm...
The most amazing sculpture I
have ever seen!! BEAUVO!

Enjoyed them. Thanks.

once they mean
to look like entrails

BEAUTIFUL FURNITURE

DATE

Sept 15/99
Sept 16

Sept 16/99

Sept 16/99

~~Sept~~ 16/99

Sept 16/99

Sept 16/99

Sept 16th/99

Sept. 16/99

16/9/99

16 Sept 99

Congratulations!
 Amazingly, steel sculpture has little
 appeal to me...not so with glass
 work. I love the theoretical, music + archi.
 technical references.

You are one smart guy. Very impressive work.

Superb!! Congratulations.

Love you! Great work!

Pining for 'PINE'

Great Sybil & Ryan
Spruce Grove.
EDMONTON FANTASTIC!!

Great Show! Congrats!
Excellent!!!
Beautiful!!! Loved it.
FEEL GOOD PIECES!

Thank you for the beauty
wonderful. It is like, DALL
ESCHER DE appearance. Amazing.
Keep up the great work.

16 Sept. 99

16 Sept 99

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16 Sept
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DATE

16th Sept /99

16 Sept 99

17 Sept 99

16 Sept 99

16 Sept 99

16 Sep '99

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We loved the show!

Love the balance of whimsy and

Pretty Cool. Congratulations.

Good

Congratulations!

I really like Green on a 2nd floor.

Two Words "Fab"

I laughed, I cried, I peed in "Dagon"

Congratulations; it's been great knowing you, have a great life.

Nice work Fry Guy!

Congratulations
Good stuff!!

Sept. 16, 1999

Sept 16 '99

Sept 16/99

Sept. 16

September 16

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Sept 16

Sept. 16

Sept 16

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Sept 16

Sept 16

Great work Ryan
Continued success!
You've come along way since
131 Baby! Great work.
FABULOUS! AS ALWAYS ----

quarry! (I can guess you're Nautist).

Amazing work!

Most enjoyable work cutta that
studio in a long time! Congratulate
p.s. - you look really cute in shirt!

EXCELLENT SHOW RYAN!

Wonderful Evening! ^{I can't} spell!

Quite interesting, good work!

good and amazing!!

Daydream is my favorite

DATE

Sept 16/99

Sept 16/99

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Sept. 16/99.

"

west)

at
atland.
it!

Sept 16/99

Sept 16/1999

Sept 16/99

SEPT 16/1999

Sept. 16/1999

Awesome slappable!
sculpture baby!

Great Showkyn! / Fakes.

Beautiful curves! Thanks!
Congrats! You Did
a lot of work...

Copatulus

I should know how delicate lady could be!

I ENJOYED GETTING EVERYONE DRUNK
FOR YOU, YOU TRUAY ARE A DARKHARE.

WELL, I SPOSE THE SCULPTURES AREN'T
BAD, BUT DAMN! THAT GUY IN THE GREY
SUIT IS ONE VERY MUTHA' F. I
"RECIPIAL"? - EASY STREET"?
BY GOD MAN, YOU'VE GONE
SIDEWAYS!

When I see wood and touch it
only to find steel, you've
done something magical!!!

||||

Thursday Sept 16/99

Sept. 16

Sept 16

Sept 16

Sept. 16.

Sept. 16

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Sept.

Sept 17

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Sept 19

"

GREAT JOB RYAN! BEST WORKERS
IN SCULPTURE FOR THE FUTURE
Ryan, I love your work, always
have, always will! Good luck!
Ryan, I wanted to touch it, sit
on it, climb on it, bathe in it.
Need I say more?

~~Very touchable.~~

Very touchable.

Are they for sale?

MUSICIAN WONDROUS. HAVE NOT YET AS TACT.

Very intriguing wood of like to green.

Very nice to touch.

Elegant, damn fine sculpture!
Very creative! Your mother
must be proud of you.
Ryan, your work is beautiful! Really
like Pine + Daydream. Congratulations!

AWESOME JOB

DATE

Sept 19

SEPT 21

Sept 21

21

21

Sept 21

22 Sept

Sept 22

Sept 22

Sept. 22

"

Kiara was very excited
about your work, Ryan!

'REVIVAL'; 'OVERTURE'; 'FANFARE'; 'MARCH'...
AAAAHHHHHHH... SOOOO NICE. THANK
Great work. Very interesting
combination of concepts.

Congratulations Ryan —!

Thank you & Congrats!
Wonderful!

Congrats Ryan! Will miss
the painted surfaces! you

Great Job Ryan!
Very Impressive
I'm very impressed with what
you've accomplished since
we last knew each other!
Something to think about.
Intriguing! Love Night
maritz!

DATE

23 Sept

NIGHTY FIVE PARTNER

Great show. Very impressed.
Quite a designed aesthetic - a pleasure.
Liked this very much. Thanks

exceptional

Excellent.

I wish I could live inside one of these sculptures.
Love it

I'll look out for his future work.
Super-Duper!

Very good use of the cave structures

Many evoke a great pin-o image

DATE

Nice use of curves and beads.

'fan-taz-tick!!' Absolutely FAB!!

Good Job Buddy!

Spectacular - Very Impressive.

interesting (+ that's good interesting)

Edmonton, Alberta

feeling of a turnhorse daydream.

Handing in a heavy way

very, very good work.

very elegant, nice work Ryan

Ditto

Chp

Sept 24/99

Sept 24/99

September 26, 1999

Sept 26/99

Sept 26/99

University of Alberta Library



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